

**Career Transition
Center**

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**"Not in
his goals
but in his
transitions
is man
great"**

- Ralph Waldo
Emerson, U.S. poet

BELLINGHAM BOUND: JOB SEARCH ADVICE FROM OUTSIDE THE BELTWAY

- Paul Stephenson (retired 2004)



Thanks for permitting JSP "graduates" to offer our perspective on this [job search] process. Don't know if my thoughts are useful or not, but here they are nonetheless.

I retired in October 2004 to Bellingham, Washington, population 68,000, a city where I knew no one. As you might imagine, the local job scene appeared quite limited for someone with a foreign affairs background. My initial, somewhat panicked, flurry of "traditional" job search activity (networking, mailing resumes, interviews, researching openings, etc.) never turned up a real job offer. Somewhat discouraged, I then focused instead on establishing a social network in the community, on enjoying my new-found freedom, and tried to push my job concerns (driven more by perceived financial need rather than any burning desire to work) to the background. It seemed that, as soon as I shifted to appreciating the flexibility retirement afforded me, the job opportunities arose.

Some six months after completing the JSP and leaving the Foreign Service, things began to shift. I unexpectedly heard from two old friends living elsewhere in the U.S., both of whom approached me to work with their companies as a consultant operating from my new home in Washington state. I was flattered and gratified by their interest, but ultimately passed on both opportunities. In one case I felt that I didn't have the contacts the company was seeking to sell their products within the USG. The other was looking for a greater commitment in time worked that I was willing to make, having by this time found the rhythms of no daily commute and a highly flexible "schedule" increasingly compelling. So I po-

lately rejected both overtures despite my earlier frenzy to find something to supplement my income.

Those decisions not to work were occasioned by two realizations: first, that I was stimulated and fulfilled by the non-work activities I had been developing, and, second, by the realization that my financial situation and outlook were not as pressing as I had feared during the financial planning portion of the [Retirement Planning Seminar]. My family (including two children in high school) was living comfortably, if not extravagantly, on my pension and investments. And, as importantly, the realization that I no longer needed to increase my net worth, but rather manage it to last several more decades (hopefully!), at last took root.

I then received a unsolicited job offer through my sister-in-law to work with a Denver-based nonprofit organization on early childhood education -- the federal Head Start program. While again flattered by the interest, I pointed out that I knew nothing about education and even less about early childhood education. My contact assured me that the nonprofit was seeking someone with problem-solving and people skills, and that an education background was unnecessary. Despite my skepticism I took an initial contract as a consultant and traveled to New Jersey for my first assignment.

At the beginning of the first day I was extremely nervous that I would let the consulting team down, and made sure that the group leader knew about my complete lack of relevant experience. She reassured me and we began the work of transferring control of the program from

the New Jersey entity to my Colorado employer. It quickly became apparent that I could do the work using the same skill set developed in the Foreign Service -- identify priorities, develop a plan, negotiate, execute, communicate. And it turned out that I was not only able to do it, but do it rather well. And as importantly, I really enjoyed it, despite, or perhaps because of, its complete dissimilarity to my labors with State.

To bring this long story to a conclusion, after 10 months I am now one of the nonprofit's "go to" guys. I have the opportunity to work nearly every week, and, just as importantly, to decline a contract without concern that subsequent offers will suffer. So far I have been to Ohio, northern and southern California, Maine, West Virginia, Georgia, Louisiana, and Nevada in addition to my first jaunt to New Jersey. As my experience and reputation have grown, I have increased my fee to about what I was making in the Foreign Service at retirement, plus expenses. But I now only work when it suits me, probably about 8-10 weeks this year.



*"To achieve goals
you've never
achieved before,
you need to start
doing things
you've never
done before."*

~ Stephen Covey

So, how to summarize all of this into the "gems of advice" that the wonderful Amy Pitts originally requested? They are

probably both trite and obvious; I offer them because I at least hadn't really comprehended them until I was many months into retirement. Here's my attempt:

1. Take your time in looking for work. Instead, enjoy your new-found freedom, but don't expect the transition to your new life of leisure to be immediate, or effortless. In my case I dreamed every night for at least six months that I was at some Foreign Service post somewhere. Clearly part of me was missing it, while another part was reveling in endless days doing whatever I pleased.
2. Try and figure out why you are looking for employment. If it's to occupy your time, you may be surprised how quickly your day fills after just a few months of retirement (all my retired friends remark on this). If it is for psychic satisfaction, give yourself some time to separate psychologically from your previous career (I think that was what all those dreams were about). If it is for financial security, determine whether your mindset is still the one of wealth accumulation you have long pursued, or whether wealth management is now in order. That may seem a subtle distinction, but I believe it is an important one.
3. Let everyone, everywhere, know you are retired. You can revel it in -- believe me they are all envious because they are not there yet -- and at the same time subtly let them know that you are amenable to further employment.
4. Look beyond what you have done in the Foreign Service. Leave yourself

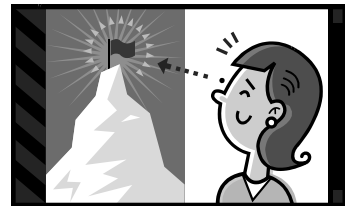
open for reinvention, something way outside your experience base. For me, I suddenly find myself working in a field I never had any interest in or knowledge of -- and I love it.

5. Its retirement. Its great!! Embrace it. After a month I began feeling like I was on summer break in high school. There were no obligations, few cares, and lots of time to hang out with new friends and undertake new activities. I have as much fun with the group of retired old farts I run with now as I did with the bunch I partied with in college, or played with in high school.

After nearly 18 months of retirement, I am as content as I have ever been in life. I hope your transition to this next stage of life is as fulfilling.

"Once you replace negative thoughts with positive ones, you'll start having positive results."

~ Willie Nelson, U.S. singer and songwriter



EDITOR'S NOTES

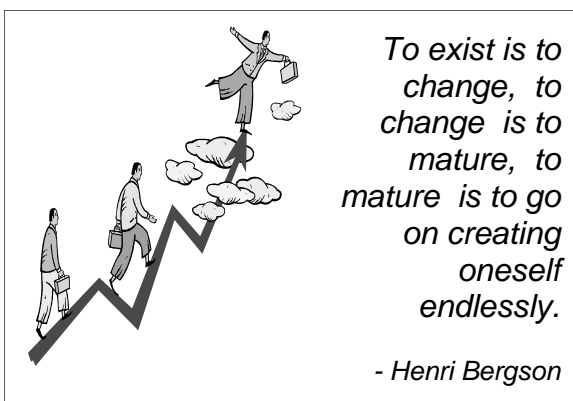


Here are more gems of advice from JSP graduates who courageously ventured outside the Washington Beltway. These and the article above are the second installment in this series.

We welcome more! And, by the way, are you noticing certain trends in the advice? Look for them!

1. "Here are my five thoughts of counsel:

- Have patience. You just don't know when something might turn up.
- Have a sense of adventure. Try a few things that seem marginal: most of these won't pan out, and then you don't have to think about them anymore.
- Follow leads that seem promising in a very active way. For example, with the writing tutor position, I sort of stumbled into it, but I kept on top of it then, sending a letter and resume, requesting an interview, making it clear I'd be available if anything ever opened up, saying I'd take the maximum number of courses possible, etc.
- Don't neglect things other than the job search such as avocations, loved ones, exercise, etc.
- Settle for less than the ideal. Such is the nature of life."



2. "Before departing Metro Washington, determine where you plan to retire, why

in that city, town, village, and what do you want to do in terms of employment. Having retired to Green Bay, Wisconsin (population 102,300) for family reasons, there is little demand for foreign service experience, which was anticipated on my part.

"However, one aspect of the foreign service was teaching, guiding, mentoring younger members and [that experience] makes it possible to consider teaching on a part-time basis. It also helps to have been a teacher prior to joining the foreign service.

"I have answered two newspaper advertisements asking for part-time instructors at the Technical College -- one for math (am teaching my third semester since arriving in Green Bay in September 2002) and the other for social science. The social science application is being considered.

"The difficulty in seeking jobs in this community is a lack of local job references and contacts. That has been overcome in part through a willingness to prove that I can handle those positions that I enjoy -- umpire girls junior varsity and freshmen softball games (develops contacts through athletic directors at the local high schools) and in the Ashwaubenton recreation department (another set of contacts in the department as well as the players in the various leagues), although you must pass a state exam to become qualified to umpire but if you've been an umpire before, it's easy enough to accomplish; and part-time work for an inventory company (through a newspaper advertisement). At the very least, this provides some references for future use. As for the pay, it makes it possible

to purchase four tickets for each of four Green Bay Packers home games, so there are unexpected benefits to retiring to a small city.

"The major keys are contacts, local references, having some idea of your work interests and your willingness to accept jobs that aren't typical foreign service type activities, using your local newspaper for positions of interest, and applying to technical colleges and universities for possible part-time positions."

"You can clutch the past so tightly to your chest that it leaves your arms too full to embrace the present."

Jan Glidewell

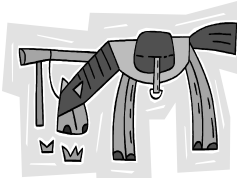


3. "I too came to Wisconsin for family and financial reasons. I knew there would be limited demand for my Foreign Service experiences. I did however understand that I could sell my skills to the right people and could hopefully develop contacts that would lead to many things. I also am interested in teaching, though I don't have the advantage you had in having been a teacher I realized I could still participate, at least initially, as a substitute. I've enrolled in a course ... to become a certified substitute and once I have that the local school where my kids go will accept me. I'm also going to go to the local technical college and try and drum up some interest in myself and what I may have to offer. It's only a matter of getting off my duff and getting something done.

"I made many of my new friends and

contacts through my kids. Some of my best friends are fathers on my son's football team. I joined the grid iron club here and hope to become one of the coaches for the junior varsity next fall. Obviously, they'll take anyone! I also started volunteering at the school after hours to help in the high school and elementary after school study hall. I was surprised at how much I liked helping the elementary kids. I thought they would be a handful but they really welcome help. Its the High School kids that are a handful.

"I was asked to speak at the local woman's club about my overseas experiences. That led to an invitation to speak at the American Legion Post. My son's second grade class asked me to be their speaker this month at the citizen of the month assembly. So as you can see I'm making headway on getting around."



"The past is a guide post, not a hitching post."

- L. Thomas Holdcroft

Resources

Trapped in the DC Beltway and thinking of escape? Here are some tools that can help you decide where to resettle:

Books:

- AMERICA'S TOP-RATED CITIES (2004) AND AMERICA'S TOP-RATED SMALLER CITIES (Grey House Publishing, 2004)
- CITIES RANKED AND RATED: YOUR GUIDE TO THE BEST PLACES TO LIVE IN THE U.S. AND CANADA (Bert Sperling, 2004)

Magazines:

- *Site Selection Magazine* – www.siteselection.com/ Although primarily designed for businesses thinking of locating or relocating in a new city, it has useful tools for individuals as well
- *Where to Retire* – www.wheretoretire.com Available in hard copy by subscription or at your neighborhood newsstand. Also pub-

"There are two things to aim at in life: first, to get what you want; and after that, to enjoy it. Only the wisest of mankind achieve the second."

- Logan Pearsall Smith in *Afterthoughts*



lishes books on the subject.

Online:

- *America's Most Livable Communities* – www.mostlivable.org. Publishes annual list based on a variety of factors
- *BANKRATE.COM* – www.bankrate.com. Offers free cost of living statistics for U.S. cities that also allows comparisons
- *Chamber of Commerce Directory* - www.chamberofcommerce.com/
- *CityRating.com* – www.cityrating.com Offers free cost of living statistics for U.S. cities that also allows comparisons
- *CNN Money* – <http://money.cnn.com/best/bpretire/> Slick research tool to help you find the best place to retire. Good format, unexpected results! You are invited to enter your priorities on weather, affordable housing, low crime rate, proximity to major airports, and other factors; then you are given a list of cities that
- meet your priorities. You can click on each city listed or type in a city name to receive a "Statistical Snapshot" of the city which includes statistics on weather, financial, housing, leisure, culture, travel, health, and more.
- *DataMasters* – www.datamasters.com targeted at IT professionals
- *Find Your Spot* – www.findyourspot.com Quizzes you on climate, crime rates, recreational opportunities, community resources, preferred geographical features, and more. Then it produces a list. Each location comes with general information, photos, and climate data as well as real estate and job connections for each location.
- *Monstermoving.com* – www.monstermoving.com Online marketplace for relocation information, services and moving-related decision support tools
- *Moving.com* – www.moving.com/tools/costofliving Offers free cost of living statistics for U.S. cities that also allows comparisons
- *Partners for Livable Cities* – www.mostlivable.org
- *Relocation Central* - www.relocationcentral.com
- *Sperling's Best Places* – www.bestplaces.net Similar criteria to other sites for sorting the best place for you. Does include lists of the best and worst cities for dating as well as the most and least stressful. Good comparison tool for cities, comparing economy, housing health, crime, education, climate, transportation, and other general factors



"The stories that you tell about your past shape your future."

- Eric Ransdell

including how many Starbucks are in the city!



JOB LEADS

The following companies are signed up for the March 28th Job Fair. Those of you who cannot attend may want to explore their websites to see what kind of jobs they are hiring for now.

Abt Associates Inc. -
www.abtassociates.com

Adecco Government Services -
www.adecco.com

Allied Technology Group, Inc. -
www.alliedtech.com

The All-Star Group Companies, Inc. - <http://allstarcompanies.net/>

ARD, Inc. - www.ardinc.com

CARANA Corporation - www.carana.com

Chemonics International Inc. -
www.chemonics.com

Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) -
www.csc.com

Creative Associates International, Inc. -
www.caii.com

Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) -
www.dai.com

Emerging Markets Group -
www.emergingmarketsgroup.com

FINCA International -
www.villagebanking.org

General Dynamics Advanced Information Systems - www.gd-ais.com

Geneva Software, Inc. - www.genevasi.com

GlobalCorps - www.globalcorps.com

Harlan Lee & Associates -
www.hlassociates.com

International Resources Group (IRG) -
www.irgltd.com

John Snow, Inc. (JSI) - www.jsi.com

KellyFedSecure - www.kellyfedsecure.com

Louis Berger Group, Inc. -
www.louisberger.com

Lucent Technologies - www.lucent.com

Management Systems International (MSI) -
www.msiworldwide.com

ManTech Security & Mission Assurance -
www.mantech.com

Mary Kay, Inc. - www.marykay.com/

Planning and Development Collaborative International, Inc. (PADCO) -
www.padco.aecom.com

PRO-telligent LLC -
www.PRO-telligent.com

Pulse, Inc. - www.pulse-sys.com

Quality Technology, Inc. - www.qutech.com

Robert Half International - www.rhi.com

Senior Employment Resources -
www.seniorjobs.org

Snelling Personnel -
www.snelling.com/metro/

Temporaries Now & Gaskins Search Group -
www.temporariesnow.com

The Services Group, Inc. (TSG) -
www.tsginc.com

United Nations Employment & Assistance Unit (IO/S/EA) - www.state.gov/p/empl/

U.S. Investigative Services (USIS) -
www.usis.com

U.S. Peace Corps - www.peacecorps.gov

University of Phoenix - www.phoenix.edu

University Research Company, LLC -
www.urc-chs.com or www.qaproject.org

Wisdom Management Solutions, LLC - NA

Worldwide Information Network Systems

Inc. (WINS) - www.winsnetworks.com

ATTENTION JSP GRADS!

JSP Follow-up Meetings

There will be 2 follow-up meetings in November. Graduates of any JSP class are welcome to attend — not just the March 2006 participants. Both meetings will be held in Room E-2118 at 10:00 am.

Tuesday, April 11
Tuesday, April 25

Come share your job search experience!

CTC Job Fairs

The next CTC Job Fair will be held on August 22, 2006 from 1 to 4 pm in the

*"Hope is a renewable option:
If you run out of it at the end of the day, you get to start over in the morning."*



- Barbara Kingsolver

FSI
Field



"Sometimes the most urgent and vital thing you can possibly do is take a complete rest."

- Ashleigh Brilliant



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